

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing Of Claims

1. (currently amended) A locking mechanism for a container or a holding device, said locking mechanism comprising:

a first part that defines a recess having a holding surface and a bottom surface;

a second part that cooperates with said first part in interlocking relationship, said second part defining a tongue that cooperates with the holding surface of said recess to secure said first part to said second part, said second part being releasable from said first part by deflecting said tongue toward the bottom surface of said recess; and

a blocking element that is located between said bottom surface of said first part and the tongue of said second part, said blocking element being severably connected to one of said tongue or the bottom surface of said recess by a connector that is severable such that said blocking element blocks the deflection of said tongue toward the bottom surface of said recess at times when said connector is unsevered and said blocking element is secured to one of said tongue or the bottom surface of said recess, and such that said tongue is deflectable toward the bottom surface at times when said connector is severed and said blocking element is removed from between said tongue and said bottom surface; and

a tool that includes a blade for severing said connector of said blocking element from the tongue of said second part or from the bottom surface of the recess of said first part, said blocking element defining sloped surfaces that cooperate with said blade to guide the blade to an area of said blocking element that is adjacent to the bottom surface of the recess of said first part.

2. (canceled)

3. (canceled)

4. (previously presented) The locking mechanism of Claim 1 wherein said blocking element is comprised of the same material as said second part and wherein said blocking element and said second part are connected by an integral ridge.

5. (previously presented) The locking mechanism of Claim 1 wherein the portion of said second part that defines said tongue, the portion of said first part that defines said recess, and said blocking element are made of a plastic material.

6. (original) The locking mechanism of Claim 5 wherein the plastic material of the blocking element is the same type of material as the plastic material of the tongue and the portion of said first part that defines said recess.

7. (original) The locking mechanism of Claims 5 or 6 wherein said first part includes a ridge member that defines the holding surface of said first part and wherein said ridge member and said blocking element are molded onto said first part by means of plastic injection molding.

8. (original) The locking mechanism of Claims 5 or 6 wherein said tongue and said blocking element are molded onto said second part by means of plastic injection molding.

9. (previously presented) The locking mechanism of Claim 1 wherein the blocking element is a separate member that is secured to one of the tongue of said second part or the recess of said first part by fastening means.

10. (original) The locking mechanism of Claim 9 wherein said fastening means is selected from the group of gluing, screwing and riveting.

11. (previously presented) The locking mechanism of Claim 1 wherein the blocking means is connected to the bottom surface of the recess of the first part.

12. (canceled)

13. (previously presented) The locking mechanism of Claim 1 wherein said blocking element comprises an array of separate elements, each element of said array blocking deflection of the tongue in the direction toward the bottom surface of the recess.

14. (original) The locking mechanism of Claim 13 wherein a tool is required to separate each element of the array from one of said first part or said second part.

15. (original) The locking mechanism of Claim 13 or 14 wherein the elements of said array of blocking elements are arranged in side-by-side relationship.

16. (original) The locking mechanism of Claims 13 or 14 wherein the elements of said array of blocking elements are arranged in end-to-end relationship.

17. (currently amended) The locking mechanism of Claims 1, ~~2, 3, 4~~, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, ~~12, 13~~, or 14 wherein said container is a closed container in which objects can be stored.

18. (currently amended) The locking mechanism of Claims 1, ~~2, 3, 4~~, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, ~~12, 13~~, or 14 wherein said locking mechanism is for a holding device, said first part comprising a holding plate and said second part comprising a tongue that is that is pivotally connected to the

holding plate, said tongue including an interlocking tongue that engages a surface of the recess on the holding plate to secure the tongue to the holding plate.

19. (currently amended) The locking mechanism of Claims 1, ~~2, 3, 4~~, 5, 6, ~~9~~, 10, 11, ~~12~~, 13, or 14 wherein said locking mechanism can be repeatedly opened and closed at times when the blocking element is not in place between the first part and the second part.

20. (currently amended) The locking mechanism of Claims 1, ~~2, 3, 4~~, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, ~~12~~, 13, or 14 wherein said blocking element has a cross-section in the general shape of a triangle with one edge of said triangle being secured to one of said first part or said second part.

21. (new) A locking mechanism for a container or a holding device, said locking mechanism comprising:

a first part that defines a recess having a holding surface and a bottom surface;

a second part that cooperates with said first part in interlocking relationship, said second part defining a tongue that cooperates with the holding surface of said recess to secure said first part to said second part, said second part being releasable from said first part by deflecting said tongue toward the bottom surface of said recess; and

a blocking element that is located between said bottom surface of said first part and the tongue of said second part, said blocking element having a cross-section in the general shape of a

triangle with one edge of said triangle being secured to one of said first part or said second part, said blocking element being severably connected to one of said tongue or the bottom surface of said recess by a connector that is severable such that said blocking element blocks the deflection of said tongue toward the bottom surface of said recess at times when said connector is unsevered and said blocking element is secured to one of said tongue or the bottom surface of said recess, and such that said tongue is deflectable toward the bottom surface at times when said connector is severed and said blocking element is removed from between said tongue and said bottom surface.

22. (new) The locking mechanism of Claim 21 further comprising a tool that severs said connector of said blocking element from the tongue of said second part or from the bottom surface of the recess of said first part.

23. (new) The locking mechanism of Claim 22 wherein said tool includes a blade for severing said connector of said blocking element.